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846 789 [824] is also a valuable charm against evil spirits and is often used. Ashes from the fire burning within the room are also taken and sprinkled around the cot or around the spot where the newborn infant is lying on the floor. No spirit will dare cross this line of ashes. Ashes are also placed on the door sill to bar access to the house from that direction. Iron is similarly used; bits of nails being driven into the frame about the door, or a piece of iron hung just over it. Sometimes wine may be sprinkled around the delivery room after the *dai* has cleaned up. This attracts the beneficent deities and as a result the evil ones will have to flee. During those six critical nights an elderly man should sleep just outside the doorway. Every form of protection known should be attempted, for there is no telling where *bhuts* may enter as they can come into the house as air does.

853 825 There is a night bird belonging to a class of owls which the Kols greatly fear. This is the night-jar (*Caprimulgus asiaticus*), called by them the *kurset* bird and often known as the goatsucker. As it is particularly fond of human milk this bird is said to watch for the women nursing babies. During the night, when the mother and child are sound asleep, this bird is very active and may slip into the house and draw the milk from the mother's breast. The mother is not aware of this, or if she is dimly conscious of something, she believes that the baby is feeding. For lack of milk the child does not grow, gets thinner and thinner and soon dies. Its constant crying is a sure sign that the *kurset* bird is stealing away its milk. The mother is also affected and may die. The [342] best possible protection against this bird is the closed door (there 824] being no windows), with branches of the *nim* tree hanging over it. He may also be frightened away by ill-sounding noises. These birds, commonly seen in Central India, have a peculiar way of looking at one, as if they were staring and searching for something.

846 The stump of the umbilical cord, called the *nara*, has usually fallen off by the sixth day and this is invariably buried in the floor of the house, and fire kept burning over the place of its burial for six days more. Several things are buried with the cord, although reports vary. [824] Occasionally some *bel* leaves are put with it and it is thus interred; again a few copper pice, some turmeric (*haldi—Curcuma longa*) and *supari* nut (*Areca catechu*) are also buried with it. At other times some grains of rice may be coloured yellow with *haldi* and then dropped one by one into the hole prepared for the cord. As each grain is dropped [551] the name of some relative is called. In the future the child should hold these names in great respect and never call such persons directly by name. This dropping of rice, however, is not usually observed. The burial of the *nara* or cord is said to be very important. It is really a

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that the child is a girl and let him alone, for it is boys that they really 302
try to get hold of.

Hair from the first cutting should never be thoughtlessly thrown [826]
out on the ground. The best thing to do is to wrap it in a small piece of cloth and take it to the Nerbudda River where it is thrown in as an offering. No special trip to the river is required and the hair may be kept in the house until some convenient season or until some friend or relative happens to be going that way. The belief that magic may be [754]
worked with hair is prevalent in India, but Kols do not seem to fear this danger, nor do they believe that another may work harm by possessing it.

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FIRST FEEDING: *Pasni*. Most Kols attach considerable im- 853
portance to the child's first feeding with solid food. This should be done 862
when the child is about six months old. One group said that the [197]
feeding should be done at five months in the case of a girl and six months for a boy. This indicates Hindu influences.

The family invites as many of the child's relatives as they can 852
afford to feed for a general feast following the ceremony. The child 853
is to be fed with sweetened *khir*—rice boiled in milk—which has been 862
specially prepared for this occasion. A portion of *khir* is placed in a 574
small cup made from the leaves of the mango tree (*Mangifera indica*). As the ceremony begins, the friends and relatives wash their hands [515]
with water specially brought for them; the child's teeth, if in, are cleaned by being lightly brushed with a mango twig. The person who breaks the child's "fast", and this may be one of a number of relatives, [602]
among whom we find mentioned the name of the father, mother and father's sister (*phuphu*), first dips the index finger of the right hand into the *khir* and brings a portion up to the child's mouth but does not actually touch its lips, for the finger is immediately withdrawn. This movement is made six times, but on the seventh occasion the finger is put into the child's mouth and with it a bit of the *khir* is inserted. Others present follow in the same way until all have fed the infant. Each one who thus feeds the child is supposed to drop into a dish beside it some money, the amount varying according to circumstances: it ought not to be less than four pice and may be as much as eight annas. The money thus collected is used to buy silver bangles for the child.

Sometimes the child is fed with a silver coin rather than by the plain finger. This may be an influence of Hinduism. One group said the silver coin must be either a four or eight anna piece. The coin used is dipped into the *khir* and the baby fed on the seventh approach as in the above description. The *phuphu* receives the coins by which

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the child is fed and the money is used to buy an ornament. When groups using the finger were asked about using the coin, they said that it should not be done as the coin was not clean. Another group used a mango leaf instead of the finger. In Rewa State one group stated that just before the feeding of the child the mother should take it before the household deity, naming Bhanmasi in this case, and bowing down before her ask the *devi* to protect the child, the household, and the children yet to come.

NOSE AND EAR PIERCING. The piercing of the nose and ears is usually done by a *sonar* (goldsmith), although Kols may do it themselves. The hole is generally made by simply forcing the ends of the ring through the lobe in the ear, but for the nose a bronze instrument is used. As far as could be ascertained no ceremony is performed at the time nor does the *sonar* repeat any *mantras*. The best time to have piercing done is at the time of some large *mela* (religious gathering) in the vicinity, for then there are plenty of *sonars* on hand awaiting work. When the nose is pierced a small plug of wood is first inserted, but the earrings are allowed from the beginning. The wound has onion and turmeric rubbed into it, which help it to heal. The *sonar* is given a seer of rice, some chillis and a little salt, or may be paid four pice for the piercing and paid extra for the rings according to their value. It has already been noted that the Kathautiyas use woodpith to enlarge the holes in their ears and as a result their lobes have larger holes. Kols about Jubbulpore claimed that in Rewa every Kol woman should have a ring of gold and silver on her ears or nose. Our observations however did not confirm this claim.

Earrings help to protect the child from evil. Other things as well ward off evil influences and we found that the *ritha* nut (*Sapindus mukorossi*) and half a *ghata* nut (*Zizyphus xylopyrus* (?)) are put into a strip of cloth, tied in a knot and worn round the neck. This is considered a good protection from *nazar*, the evil eye, but it does not help in the case of *bhuts*. Black bangles on the wrists and a white *poi* (dab) just in front of the ears also protect from the evil eye. A copper ring may be put on one of the ankles for any evil spirit attacking the child will become imprisoned in this. Good spirits live in amulets about the neck and drive off *bhuts*. At other times a piece of a broken or discarded human tooth, tied on a string about the wrist, is considered an effective protection. A strip of coloured cloth, red and yellow being preferred, may also be tied somewhere about the child's person. These are some of the measures which may be taken to protect the young child during the early months and years of life. Other instances